Interview with William A. Crawford

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR WILLIAM A. CRAWFORD

Interviewed by: H.G. Torbert

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Q: Could you give me a little background as to what attracted a Foreign Service officer or a diplomatist to the foreign affairs field and what general kind of preparation they had to get into the Service or the practice in diplomacy?

CRAWFORD: My introduction to foreign affairs, so to speak, came to me geographically. I spent the first seven years of my public schooling in eastern Pennsylvania. My father was a professor at Lafayette College and had a sabbatical year in 1926, and took us to France. There followed four semesters in an English school and a half a year in a French school.A year later, after I had been home, my father died of an accident and my mother took me back to France. I proceeded to graduate from the American High School and did an extra year before going to college. I had five years, four in schooling, in preparation for college. In the process I learned French and became interested in European politics.

I then went back to Hanford for my college education and proceeded to take a junior year in France. That was followed by two years at the school of Political Science preparing for the Foreign Service. By this time I had decided, in college, that the Foreign Service was what attracted me.

It so happened that in the course of all this, my mother had had a serious illness that resulted, finally, in the amputation of a leg. She became a semi-invalid. Therefore, this furthermore accounted for much of my continuing desire to go to Paris since I was the oldest of two children and in a sense I had to take care of her to a degree.

Q: She remained in France all this time?

CRAWFORD: She remained in France all this time. Yes. She spent two years in an American hospital. In my preparatory years my education had been something of a “salad”—some English schooling, some French schooling and then winding up in the Foreign Service.

After college I went back to Paris to be with my mother. I spent two years at the School of Political Science in Paris. That was the background that attracted me to Foreign Affairs.

Q: You were saying you had to wait a while through all the examining and getting in as one did in those days— one had to go into the ice box for a year or so to get into the Foreign Service.

CRAWFORD: I actually took three years. I came back from France and I had gotten out of the habit of taking written examinations, I flunked the first time.

Q: That was pretty normal in those days.

CRAWFORD: The next time I went back and took it again I passed the written exam but I didn't pass the orals. The chief thing seemed to be that I had been spending a little too much time abroad and not enough time in the states.

I was called back privately by Joe Green who was in charge of examinations. He encouraged me to have another try, to go out and see the country and get to know my own

country better. I thought it over and actually I thought it was a very sensible idea. I had never really been much west of the Mississippi.

I went for a third try. In the meanwhile I toured the country. I got a job out on the West Coast with Douglas Aircraft for a few months. I studied what came from Arizona and what came from Montana, etc. I came back after having passed the writtens once more and then got married. I took the orals for the second time and passed them with no problems. I finally entered the Service with the class of '41.

Q: They wanted to be sure you really wanted to join in those days.

CRAWFORD: They wanted you to represent the United States as a whole and not just the East Coast or West Coast.

Q: Would you give me a quick sketch of the first post or two with any highlights that you recall?

CRAWFORD: I was sent to Havana in my first post—'41. I stayed there until '44. I thought I was being typed as a Latin American expert by that time and wondered how to get out of it. It was a very enriching tour because I was lucky enough to have Coert duBois as consul general during the first two years. He was a great believer in switching people around. I wound up doing virtually everything that there was to be done. So I had very fine, broad training.

Q: A lot of this probably was concern with the effects of the war on the Caribbean.

CRAWFORD: Yes. In the latter part there was a certain amount of economic black listing and so forth. Then I went on to work for Ellis Briggs and Stewart Braden. I was Braden's aide for a year or two and in the room between the two of them. I learned a great deal in that position. Although I was Braden's general aide I also handled the cultural affairs program. It was good training, I got a little of everything except political reporting.

Q: Having gotten through in Havana you went back to the Department for a while or did you get to Moscow?

CRAWFORD: No. I decided toward the end of my tour in Havana that I wanted to go to Moscow. While I was in Havana the Department of State asked for volunteers to go to Moscow. This was in the spring/summer of 1944. They were looking for six officers to learn Russian first, and then go to Moscow. It looked to me like an interesting thing in itself, we were coming to grips with the Russians at that time.

Secondly, it offered an opportunity to get out of the Latin American field. I had begun to feel that I might be typed as a Latin American specialist. Although it was interesting, I preferred the idea of going to Europe. This seemed to offer the possibility of possibly getting into Europe by the back door, that is, Eastern Europe. I put in for it and was accepted. I was trained at Harvard then sent over to Moscow.

Q: Was that primarily the language or training or what?

CRAWFORD: That was all language training. Yes. Although I did study a bit of Russian literature and so on while there. But it was to give you a quick intensive grounding—in Russian grammar there's certain vocabulary.

Three of us were sent to Moscow, three were sent to Cornell. At that time the Department was trying out the field. I wound up in Moscow, arriving amidst of the victory celebration. I stayed in Moscow until the summer of '47.

Q: Was Averell Harriman still there when you got there or had he left already?

CRAWFORD: Yes. Averell was ambassador and George Kennan was his number two. I served through Averell's tenure from that point on until the spring of '46. I was there during the period when George Kennan sent his long telegram to the Department in February of '46. I stayed on for while with Bedell Smith.

Q: What did a new man in Moscow start out doing in that time?

CRAWFORD: They started you out in the administrative section where you really had to deal with the local staff and the chauffeurs.

Q: And speak Russian.

CRAWFORD: And with Bureau for Foreigners of the Foreign Ministry, which was the bureau for services for foreigners. And speak Russian, yes. So it gave you very good training of that kind. Also you were always your head against the wall dealing with Russians. At that time if you wanted a box of matches you almost had to send a note to the foreign office.

I spent my first two months in administration. Then I was moved up to be the press secretary. There my job was to read the press, and send to the Department any telegrams of items of very special interest. Also to read the Russian political journals and reviews and so on. The rest of my time was spent there. It was a very small operation. It was very stimulating because the group who were there were an exciting group of older and younger officers, all of whom were specialized in the field.

Q: This would have been the period when the happy alliance turned into the Cold War.

CRAWFORD: That's right.

Q: Was that clearly noticeable in Moscow to you as a working stiff, so to speak?

CRAWFORD: Yes. Your associations were, first of all, made with a few so called “trained seals” from the Russian government. Then in June of 1947 the Russians passed a state secrets act which made it a crime subject to considerable penalties to talk to any foreigner about almost anything that didn't have to do with daily business. At that point even information from the trained seals almost dried up. So I was there when the Cold

War took hold.Moscow was very exciting. I had one quite interesting experience. I had a wife and two small children by that time, and I had to get them over. The policy at the Embassy in Moscow was then that you could only have living accommodations with one bed - this meant there was no room for my two small children and Barbara couldn't do that. I had to scrounge around and I was lucky enough to find a little dacha outside of town. I got Hannermans's permission to bring over my own furniture and to leave my own bed in Moravia and to set myself up at the dacha and to bring my wife and children. For almost two years we lived that way in the little winterized dacha I finally got fixed up. We were the only ones in Moscow who were living outside of the Embassy compound and it was really quite fascinating.

Q: By the time you got through with that tour did you feel your Russian was pretty good?

CRAWFORD: It was pretty good for practical purposes. I could read the press without any problem. I had some problems on oral Russian. I was sent back then to Washington to the Russian desk. I stayed at the Russian desk for several years. Then I was sent on for advanced Russian training at Columbia in 1949.

Q: Again that was basically language training at Columbia?

CRAWFORD: It included language training and I had a whole year of it. I was there with Walter Stoessel and Dick Davis. We also studies economics and law and other subjects, like Russian history.

Q: Did you go to Paris when you left there?

CRAWFORD: I went to Paris.

Q: Did you do the eastern European job in Paris?

CRAWFORD: Yes. That's right. I did. I succeeded Norris Chipman in Paris. He had been in charge of liaison with the Foreign Office on Russian matters since 1946 and was responsible for following communist activities there. That's what I carried on with.

Q: It really didn't hurt your feelings to be back in Paris again?

CRAWFORD: No it didn't as a matter of fact. My mother was still living, but she died while I was there.

Q: It was comforting to be there at that time.

CRAWFORD: It was.

Q: Were there any great events that happened during that particular tour in the international field? Who was the ambassador?

CRAWFORD: I started out with David Bruce and then Jimmy Dunn, who was followed by Doug Dillon. So I was there with three of them. The Korean war broke out shortly after I arrived and the main question for a while was the setting up of the European defense community. That did not however, involve redirecting my reporting which was mainly on communist activities.

There had been in the late '40's a certain amount of strikes and other problems that created a communist treat there. While I was there however, the communist party was strong, but it was kept under control and didn't get out of hand. My job was to gain as wide an understanding of what was going on with the Soviet Union at the time.

Q: I take it from there you came back to the Department to EE (Office of Eastern Europe) for the European bureau?

CRAWFORD: Yes I was brought back as deputy director of EE and I was there for two years.

Q: And EE was in charge of everything east of the Iron Curtain.

CRAWFORD: That's right.

Q: Including Yugoslavia?

CRAWFORD: Yes. It gave me a broad view into and an introduction into what was going on in other parts of eastern Europe. When I started out on the job I took a months tour of various posts of eastern Europe apart from Moscow. EE was a very good experience, which was followed by a year at the National War College.

Q: Did you feel that the War College was a worthwhile thing for a diplomat to do?

CRAWFORD: Yes. I did indeed. I was a great year. I did a paper on Hungary, I thought I was going to Hungary at the time. It turned out that I wound up in Czechoslovakia, but I got a commendation for my paper. I was lucky enough to have my committee win the final competition on a national policy report.

Q: This was an interesting year to study Hungary because it was the year of the uprising.

CRAWFORD: That's right. I was to go over as number two there, but then they cut down the size of the mission considerably and Gary Atkinson took over there, so I was sent to Prague.

Q: Who was with you at Prague?

CRAWFORD: Alex Johnson was there for a few months. I arrived in August of '57 and he left at Christmas. Then I was in charge for four or five months until John Allison arrived. I actually had a two year tour there as DCM with both of these far eastern specialists.

Q: Who were basically dealing with the Chinese. At at least Alex was?

CRAWFORD: Alex was.

Q: Was there any particular excitement while you were in Prague?

CRAWFORD: No. Things were in the deep freeze, Novotric was in charge, and nothing much happened. I was a rather gloomy place. One thing that struck me when I first arrived was that when I made calls on my close colleagues in other missions their immediate comment was “of course you're going to enjoy Prague because it is such a beautiful city,” I waited for them to say something else, but that was the best thing they would say about Prague.

Q: We both have had this experience in the east European post where your major job was to maintain a moral presence and to observe.

CRAWFORD: Yes and just keeping the flag flying.

Q: Did you come back to the Department once more after that?

CRAWFORD: I did. I was brought back to take charge of the newly established Office of Research and Analysis for the Sino-Soviet Bloc. I was in charge of this for a couple of years. The idea was to have in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, State Department intelligence work cover both the Russian and the Chinese communist aspects at the same time. As a result I had to take a trip out to the Far East—I couldn't get to China for obvious reasons. I visited most of the other posts out there and talked with officials from other governments on the whole matter.

Q: Those were the days when we considered the hyphenated word Sino-Soviet represented one group of thought.

CRAWFORD: That was what was thought. We were kidding ourselves, obviously, and while I was on the job there—in fact, shortly after my arrival—the Chinese were breaking away from the Russians and the split developed. Then our job was to try to persuade people that a split really had developed and why. Yes the whole monolithic approach that had been taken toward the communist world was markedly altered at that time.

Q: This was the bridge between the Eisenhower and Kennedy administration more or less.

CRAWFORD: That's right.

Q: There was, perhaps, a change of approach in the United States to some degree. Did you find there was a change?

CRAWFORD: No, I found it was even difficult for the Kennedy group to recognize that there were real substantive differences that had developed. But they gradually began to come around and to recognizing there were differences.

Q: This might be a good place to touch on a subject we usually mention at some point, that is relations with the CIA and the intelligence community at large. Did you find that you had great conflicts in that area or was it just the normal give and take of bureaucratic life?

CRAWFORD: In the work that I was doing there was just the normal give and take. There weren't any strong substantive differences.

Q: By and large you were working with the same papers?

CRAWFORD: We were contributing to the National Intelligence Estimates that were drafted by the CIA, but jointly coordinated with the Defense Department, of course in the state. That was an important part of my job.

Another occurrence that happened when the Kennedy administration came in was that there was an effort made for us to tighten things up so far as numbers were concerned

and to have a leaner look. Our office, which had numbered some 100 people, was cut down to about 60. The focus of our efforts was changed considerably. Instead of helping the CIA prepare a great many basic country studies, now with a much more limited staff, we were directing very short papers aimed at the White House and National Security Council on policy related matters. It was very satisfying when we found that we were reaching a target audience, during the last year that I was there, our work was much more related to what was actually going on in the world. I think this was an excellent innovation by the Kennedy administration.

Q: This also was the period in which the Cuban missile crisis. Did you get involved in any of the evaluations on that at all?

CRAWFORD: I was there at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis and I was called in on a number of meetings with Hugh Cummings and people from the NSC—McGeorge Bundy and so on, on some matters that had to do with Cuba. I was in the inner circle, but I wasn't specifically aware of any undercover activities.

Q: While we're on relations with the military with CIA. Do you have any comments you'd like to make or would you rather wait until we get to other countries to discuss that?

CRAWFORD: I'll wait.

Q: We'll get there pretty soon anyway. At the end of this period you were appointed Minister?

CRAWFORD: Yes, Minister to Romania. That was in November of '61.

Q: Was this something that was in the works for a long time or did it come as a surprise to you? As career officers go, you were fairly young at that time to get your own mission.

CRAWFORD: Yes that's right. It did come as rather a surprise. I was simply called by the Director General of Foreign Service one day and asked to go over to the White

House the next day. I talked to Ralph Dungan and we had quite a talk. He was most interested in what was going on and apparently had some recommendations from Ambassador Reinhardt in Rome with regard to the opening to the left in Italy, where they were discussing improving relations with the communists and getting in touch with some of the overtures that the left was making. We kicked that one around a bit. We had a very interesting talk. I didn't hear anything for a couple of months or so, but then I learned that I was going back to Romania.

Q: How did this strike you compared to Czechoslovakia for instance, of course you were at a higher level. You were in charge.

CRAWFORD: I was not expecting a great deal. Traditionally Romania had been sort of the end of the line and things, they were in Czechoslovakia throughout the '50's, had been in the deep freeze. I thought this would be a very, very interesting place for somebody like myself, who enjoyed following some of the more intricate details. But I didn't anticipate what was coming which was a kind of a national revolution that occurred during the period that I was there. I had been brought up to believe that most things in the communist world were fairly monolithic and were run from Moscow. I hadn't experienced what happened thereafter in Romania.

Q: Was Ceausescu already in power?

CRAWFORD: No. Gheorghiu-Dej was. Ceausescu was the mascot on his team. He was the youngest of the whole group. What actually had happened as I realized after I was there for a bit was that in 1952 the Romanian communist hard-liners who had been trained in Moscow and were loyal to Stalin were ousted.

Gheorghiu-Dej and his group came in. They had never spent any time in Moscow, and they had been in prison before the war and for a good part of the war. They were communist trade unionists types. In '56 the so called mixed companies that had been established by the Russians—the Russian-Romanian type companies—were eliminated.

In '58 the Russians withdrew their troops from Romania, largely because the Romanians had been more or less on their best behavior during the Hungarian uprising.

So a kind of a nationalist group took over in '52, and the Russian economic controls were relaxed in '56, Russian troops were withdrawn in '58. The stage then was set for the Romanians to begin to move around on their own a bit more.

I observed from that point on that Romania had decided it would no longer be just a bread basket, but would have a sort of a mixed industrial agrarian economy. They thought that the Russians had approves of this. In '59 or so, the Russians believed their own agriculture was doing well, so the Romanians were apparently allowed to go ahead with their move toward industrialization. Then the Russians had a couple of bad agricultural years. But the Romanians had already started in this direction.

Q: What did they start with, steel mills?

CRAWFORD: Steel mills were among those things but there were also chemical plants, paper mills, and a whole variety of industrial operations which they began to bring in from the west. I could go on at length on this but its a fairly long story in itself and I've covered a good part of it in the oral interview that I did with the Kennedy Library back in March of '71.

Q: I think one of the useful things for our purposes has to do with your methods of operation as a chief of mission in Eastern Europe.What did you spend your time doing in this job? What do you think of as the important things that you did?

CRAWFORD: The first thing was in furthering what was already under way. At that time we had an ongoing cultural agreement with Romania, the only one in Eastern Europe. My initial work was to implement that cultural agreement. In a year or two, I negotiated a new cultural agreement, and was much involved in cultural matters. I think that that was a good thing because it gave the Americans and the Romanians an opportunity to establish a kind

of working relationship on something which we could agree and to get to know each other better, and your methods of operation.

Then a whole variety of things occurred, which led the Romanians to begin to break with the Russians. The Russians were trying to get the Romanians to go back on their attempts to set up a broader-based economy. The Romanians, in '62, '63 and '64, broke away, step by step, from Russian control over the organization of their economy. Their goal was to set up the kind of economy they wanted, and eventually they turned to us more and more for help and support.

My main job was to report to Washington and to try to persuade them that all these things were really happening. It wasn't easy. First of all, we had to be on top of what was going on. Next, we had trying to persuade the people in the Department who had been in Romania in the '50's that things were really changing. So, we had a reporting job to do for several years.

Finally, when we had done our reporting and things had moved to the point where the Romanians were obviously taking a different tack than the Russians on a variety of things, when we tried to persuade the Department to follow our recommendations to reward the Romanians to a degree for the independent steps they were taking. In this respect I was terribly fortunate because in 1963 we had had a visit from an American Cabinet member, Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman who spent three days in Romania. Dej convened his politburo and had long discussions with Freeman, laying out on the table what they wanted from us in terms of support for their economic program.

Then I was called back to Washington on another matter, but I let the White House know that I was there and the fortunately President asked to see me. I had an hour with him, laying out our problem.

Q: You may have been the last ambassador to have an hour with the President.

CRAWFORD: There was nobody else in the office and he was vastly interested in what was going on.

Q: Was it President Kennedy?

CRAWFORD: It was Kennedy. This was in August 22 or 23 of '63 just three months before he died. The next day he got on the phone to the department of Commerce about Romania. I saw Franklin D. Roosevelt Jr., the Under Secretary of Commerce, the next day. The problem at issue was that we had not responded to a request the Romanians had made to us for certain industrial plants they were interested in setting up. We had in fact turned them down on virtually everything, whereupon the Romanians proceeded to get these same plants from our European allies. We were, on the one hand, not benefiting financially in a business way, nor were we rewarding the Romanians for the independent actions that they had been taking.

This had all been recently documented by our embassy. The President wanted very much to get all this into the hands of the Commerce department. He wanted a new approach taken, in general, to eastern European trade, and he was exceedingly interested in the Romanian aspect. We got things started. Apparently there already had been a certain amount of study of this problem by the Export Control Review board, and it was then being considered by the President, though I had not realized this. A month later the President signed off, strongly encouraging the recommendations that they had come up with, which were along the lines of what I had been recommending. The main thing was that the President got things moving.

Q: This was essentially a more liberal export control policy?

CRAWFORD: Essentially it was. The President wanted to reward each Eastern European government individually, depending on how much effort it was putting into actions that were independent of Moscow.

Q: Did MFN come in and do it at this time?

CRAWFORD: Eventually it did, after President Kennedy got things moving. He was then assassinated. Johnson carried on with the recommendations and Romania was viewed as an example of what the Department wanted to see done. The result was that some six months later Harriman lead a team of U.S. negotiators who met with the Romanians here in Washington, and they wound up with various agreements.

The seventh floor took the lead in these developments. I forgot to mention that I came back that time on a plane with a Romanian Deputy Foreign Minister—Malitza and had long talks with him on that plane. Then I took him to meet Harriman and we had several luncheons together with Harriman. The Romanians were able to persuade Harriman about what they were doing and what they wanted in support from us. Harriman was very sympathetic and he discussed it with Secretary of State Rusk. Harriman eventually wound up heading our negotiations. So there was a coincidence of my meeting with the Romanian Deputy Foreign Minister, having long talks with him and with Harriman, and then going to see the President. Also, these events showed that it is much easier to get things done at the seventh floor and White House levels.

Q: Now in retrospect. looking back twenty-five years more or less things went along pretty well, Romania was a good boy for years and years. Now it all seems to be falling apart. It certainly had started falling apart by the time I got to Bulgaria in 1970. What is the reason for that from your perspective?

CRAWFORD: As I see it Dej carried through with a nationalistic program. Ceausescu pursued it also but put his own people in charge—a younger team. But Ceausescu was paranoid and terribly vain, and he was surrounded by a family which was very ambitious.

The best thing I can tell you is that when I went back to Romania occasionally after that and would read the Romanian press, it felt like Moscow again in '45. Everything was

Ceausescu, his speeches, his wife's actions and so forth. It was a cult of the personality combined with nepotism, and he seemed to hold very tight controls internally.

Q: Is there any essential difference between the Romanian security police methods and the Soviets?

CRAWFORD: They learned, from the Russians, although they were not quite as heavy handed as the Russians. Liberalism ideas were not allowed to be expressed at all. The system was highly centralized.

Q: But basically your analysis of the fall of Romania is corruption and mismanagement more than anything else.

CRAWFORD: Yes.

Q: Have you anything else to add on Romania before we go on?

CRAWFORD: I found the Romanians to be an interesting group to get along with and pleasant. They loved a good time.

Q: The few Romanians I've known I've always found very pleasant.

CRAWFORD: They're pretty hard working.

Q: Meanwhile the U.S. mission was made an embassy?

CRAWFORD: It was made an embassy. I was appointed as the first ambassador. It took a little while because the elections were going on at the time. I stayed there for the year as ambassador.

Q: Was your transfer a normal transfer?

CRAWFORD: It was a normal transfer. I was then sent to Paris because of my background.

Q: And you also knew the enemy.

CRAWFORD: That's right.

Q: You went to Paris in '65?

CRAWFORD: Yes.

Q: Was NATO headquarters still in Paris at that time?

CRAWFORD: Yes. De Gaulle was gradually set on moving NATO out and finally succeeded. My job there was a liaison, as special assistant for national affairs to the SACEUR (SHAPE).

Q: Who was the SACEUR?

CRAWFORD: Then it was General Lemnitzer.

Q: The whole time you were there?

CRAWFORD: Yes. I stayed there for two years. It was not an easy job, particularly when I had been involved in so much action in Romania. I found that I had too many bosses. Although I was political advisor to Lemnitzer, I also had to report to Harlan Cleveland. I also had the rank of Minister at the embassy and so I attended Ambassador Chip Bohlen's meetings.

I was a liaison between an international organization and our own American side. This made it a little difficult, because I wanted to keep the Americans well informed, but there

were some things that Lemnitzer, as the head of an international organization, didn't want to share with the embassy.

Q: Did you find Lemnitzer a reasonably easy man to get along with?

CRAWFORD: Yes I did.

Q: He's a man of opinion, I know.

CRAWFORD: He's a man of opinion, yes. He's rather old shoe, he's comfortable in general.

Q: Did NATO move by the time you were —

CRAWFORD: They closed down about the time that I left.

Q: That was really quite different then the present job of ambassador to the NATO council or was there such a thing?

CRAWFORD: Yes there was. That was the job that Harlan Cleveland had. I attended all his meetings and I attended Ambassador Bohlen's meetings. I was just down the hall from Lemnitzer and kept him informed on a variety of things.

My primary loyalty was and should have been to Lemnitzer, I suppose. I should have just kept it at that.

Q: Who wrote your efficiency report?

CRAWFORD: Lemnitzer wrote it. There were some problems that arose from things that I may have reported concerning his activities to Bohlen or to Cleveland. My job was not very carefully defined.

Q: Does this job still exist?

CRAWFORD: I'm not sure. I presume it does.

Q: I had a minor variant of this job somewhat earlier of being political advisor to the commanding general USVA, that is the commanding general in Austria which was a separate European command in those days. I had a couple of other hats too. It was an uneasy relationship. It was a technically difficult relationship.

CRAWFORD: It was technically difficult. I think I should have played it more smartly than I did.

Q: Did you travel around with the general?

CRAWFORD: I traveled with the general to some exercises. I went up to the tip of Norway —a few days of maneuvers up there. We were quite close, but I didn't' feel that I had enough substantive work to do. It was somewhat demoralizing.

Q: Then what happened?

CRAWFORD: Then I was assigned to the Inspection Corps. I came back to work for Fraser Wilkins for a couple of years.

Q: I would have thought that would be good fun and a good way to look at the Service as a whole.

CRAWFORD: It was fun. Then I retired, I was somewhat young I was 55. I had gone up very fast. I became O-1 in 58 and at that time the idea was you would be in for fifteen years of so. When I left the State Department it was cut back to twelve. I was one of those caught on the cut back.

Q: Just for curiosity I was in exactly the same boat I ran up to the twelve years and I got a tombstone promotion partly because they figured they needed me in the job I was doing. Bill Hall and I got promoted on a board where there were four or five other people who

were probably more worthy of it but we were in jobs where they wanted to keep us. That was funny. We both had that same experience of going up too fast in the middle grades.

When I first entered the service I thought under the manpower act that was rather slow getting promoted then all of the sudden I started getting promoted every other year.

CRAWFORD: That's what happened to me.

Q: It was kind of bad planning.

CRAWFORD: You mentioned the War College. I was promoted in '56 when I went to the War College—I had just been promoted to Class II. Within two years of getting out of the War College I was promoted up to Class I.

Q: Sometimes some of the things that people do after they retire are interesting in terms of a foreign service career. Would you like to discuss what you did after you got out?

CRAWFORD: I taught for a year at Landon School. I taught French there. I learned a lot about French. I enjoyed teaching very much. Then I had a very good chance at getting a job with Radio Free Europe in Munich, and so I gave up Landon in the hopes of getting that. Then they had cut backs on their budget and it didn't come through. For a year or two I worked with an outfit in Wilmington called Scolity Resources that had to do with the publication of resource material and micro films. I enjoyed that.

Q: Did this have —

CRAWFORD: They published some of the British government documents and old Russian materials and a variety of things of interest to college libraries and stacks of books of that type. Then I joined forces with a small east-west trade group here in town and spent a few years with them and did some travel to eastern Europe. Then I wound up with some eye

problems and had to stop all that traveling and carry on for quite a while with them as a director of foreign relations here. Not on a full-time basis.

Q: This was a commercial firm?

CRAWFORD: Yes.

Q: Then you had that famous tour as a member of the Foreign Bondholders Protective Company.

CRAWFORD: Yes that's true.

Q: That wasn't exactly very active but it was one thing which dealt with the problems that you had been involved with for years such as the Czech gold.

CRAWFORD: That's right. I got involved with the Czech bonds which is one aspect of the agreement on claims which was finally negotiated with Czechoslovakia.

Q: That's right.

CRAWFORD: It's amusing to me when I look back upon it because when I arrived in Czechoslovakia Alex Johnson had been working on settlement claims while he was there, and one of his last remarks to me was, “Well I'm sure Bill, within a few months you'll be able to have this settled.”

Q: Well it was settled once and then the Congress wouldn't buy it.

CRAWFORD: That's true.

Q: The final job was done by Roz Ridgeway, whose major negotiation was with Congress. That was her great contribution, the way she handled Congress. Those problems hang on and off. I got involved with it at one time in the '60's.

CRAWFORD: Well John Allison worked hard on it too.

Q: We were going to get into inter-agency relationships a little bit, we talked about. I would like any comments you have where the ambassador abroad fits into or what kind of back-up he gets from the State Department and the influence in the problem of orchestrating other agencies in the government. Do you have some views on this and some experiences?

CRAWFORD: I don't think I have very much to contribute to that. I served mainly in—at least in a responsible position in curtain posts.

Q: You've already talked about the CIA and that relationship.

CRAWFORD: In Iron Curtain posts you may have somebody on your staff who is reporting to the CIA. I never had any problems so far as I was ever made aware of. I was, in fact, told firmly that there was not to be any operational work carried on.

Q: Without your knowing about it.

CRAWFORD: That's right. Yes. And even then it wasn't to be any cloak and dagger activity.

Q: In other words whatever representatives there were there for experience for training purposes and supervising internal problems.

CRAWFORD: That's right. And were doing perhaps a certain amount of reporting, some of which perhaps I didn't see. But there was nothing to embarrass you, as there had been in the past.

Q: The nets were all run from outside. So you never had any actual experience of feeling that something was being done behind your back?

CRAWFORD: No I didn't.

Q: How about the military and the military attach#s in your post? Was that a problem as you remember?

CRAWFORD: That didn't prove to be any great problem either. They seemed to follow along with any suggestions. Sometimes I would get an attach# who would want to get out and do an awful lot of fast driving around the countryside. I had to discourage him from being too much of an eager beaver.

Q: How did you feel that the training of people from the military agencies compared with the training that your own foreign service officers had for that?

CRAWFORD: I think on the whole they had good training. They usually had language training as our own Foreign Service did. I was very proud of the language training that our people had. I think it made a considerable difference as the Romanians began to move more in our direction. We were able to report pretty accurately because our people all knew Romanian. This was a period of growing nationalism in Romania and the Russians had virtually nobody who was versed in Romanian and didn't seem to pay much attention to it. The example of our very well trained people who could get out and around and meet others was very well received. I had taken a few Romanian lessons before I went over. I got so I was able to open exhibits and make my remarks in Romanian.

Q: And sound enough like a Romanian so the Romanians understood you.

CRAWFORD: That's right. When Kennedy was assassinated I was asked to appear on Romanian television and read Johnson's statement and so and I was able to do all that. It helps, atmospherically at least.

Q: Do you have any parting thoughts about the Foreign Service as a career, or the problems of the Service today? How it compares and whether you would advise somebody else to join today?

CRAWFORD: I know its having great problems. I myself loved every minute of it. I thought it was a great career. You look back on a certain number of things. Our accomplishments even outside the strict professional work that you were doing. For example in Romania I was able to set up a little school. There was no school in Romania and none in Sophia, I think at that time. We started out with six children and now its a growing center of over one hundred. It was entirely a volunteer effort.

Q: Its not easy, you put a lot of time in it.

CRAWFORD: You put in a lot of time. You have to get the school boards and the desks and the books and all the materials. I consulted for example with Putney School people and the Calvert School people. It was very satisfying. The school has now become the international school in Bucharest.

Q: I think we've left a good many of these all over Europe and eastern Europe. I did the similar thing in Sumbawa. We had one in Sumbawa by the time I got there it was already done.

We have a family problem in the Foreign Service that you and I didn't face so much although it was beginning by the time I got out. The two career problem.

CRAWFORD: I think the Department tries to help by keeping spouses together as much as they can but there come times when they can't do that. So it does present difficulties that we didn't run into ourselves because my wife felt that she was part of a team in those days.

Q: Do have any final comments that you would like to make?

CRAWFORD: I have appreciated this opportunity very much.

Q: It's been great to have you.

CRAWFORD: I'm sorry that I couldn't say some of these things a few years ago.

Q: I wish this thing had been running longer. Thank you very much.

End of interview